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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000183

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: ZANU-PF GOVERNOR MSIPA ON SUCCESSION, FARM
SEIZURES

REF: HARARE 1492

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

Summary

11. (C) Cephas Msipa, ZANU-PF governor of Midlands Province, despairingly told polecon chief in a March 7 meeting in his Gweru office he believed the present government was betraying the liberation ideals of freedom and an end to poverty. He described President Robert Mugabe as a close friend, but thought that it was time for him to go so that political and economic reforms could take place. Nevertheless, he thought Mugabe retained enough power within the ruling party to win a struggle with General Solomon Mujuru and extend his term until 2010. Noting that Midlands Province produces half of Zimbabwe's milk, Msipa also said he is fighting efforts of Didymus Mutasa, Minister of National Security, Lands, Land Reform, and Resettlement, to expropriate the remaining white-owned dairy farms in the province which he believed would decimate the dairy industry. End Summary.

Mugabe Ignorant of Economy

12. (C) Msipa repeatedly told us he was worried about Zimbabwe's rapidly declining economy. He saw starvation all around as he traveled throughout his province. The 76-year old governor said that at Mugabe's birthday celebration, held on February 24 in Gweru, he had told Mugabe that the government's economic policies were crippling the country and were responsible for skyrocketing inflation and increasing

poverty. Mugabe had been non-responsive. Msipa opined that Mugabe did not appear to understand the economic situation and was receiving poor advice. Noting that he had been part of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle for freedom, to end poverty, and to provide opportunity for all Zimbabweans, Msipa lamented that the government was now subverting these ideals.

On Succession

13. (C) Msipa described Mugabe as a good friend, dating from their days in the liberations struggle. He thought, however, that it was time for Mugabe to go. Zimbabwe needed fresh and energetic leadership to tackle the economic crisis. Nevertheless, Mugabe, whom he described as still "vigorous," had indicated to him at the birthday event that he intended to push for an extension of his term and for harmonized elections in 2010.

14. (C) Msipa acknowledged internal tensions with ZANU-PF and the fact that a large number of the rank and file shared his feeling that Mugabe should be replaced but were afraid to oppose Mugabe. He mentioned he had spoken about succession recently with his childhood friend, ZANU-PF faction leader Emmerson Mnangagwa. Mnangagwa admitted that party members*himself included*were afraid to speak out.

15. (C) Msipa was well aware of the rift between Mugabe and Solomon Mujuru. He noted they had sat near each other during Mugabe's birthday but did not acknowledge each other. He was

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convinced that Mugabe would prevail in a power struggle. Mujuru was perceived by most in the party as greedy and even most parliamentarians from Mashonaland East province, Mujuru's home, would ultimately side with Mugabe against Mujuru. Msipa concluded that despite opposition from within the party, Mugabe, who retained the support of the security forces, still had the ability to impose his will on the party and to accomplish his goals of a term extension and harmonization of elections.

Expropriation of Farms

16. (C) Msipa explained that Midlands was the center of Zimbabwe's dairy farming industry. Before land seizures began, there had been about 200 white-owned farms in Midlands province, but there were now fewer than 40. However, these 40 farmers produced about 50 percent of Zimbabwe's milk. A dairy farmer himself, Msipa said dairy farming required expertise and intensive capital investment. Eviction of the remaining farmers, as intended by the Gazetted Land (Consequential Provisions) Act signed into law on December 20 (Ref) would decimate the dairy industry. Recognizing the effect land reform had had on the economy, he commented that "This is a problem we created for ourselves."

17. (C) Msipa said he had spoken to Mugabe about the dairy farm situation and the president was sympathetic to forestalling further seizures. But on March 5, Mutasa had visited Msipa and had instructed him to "get rid of" the remaining whites in Midlands province. Msipa said he did not like to dispossess people of their property*no matter their color-and that further seizures would be devastating for Midlands. He intended to appeal again to Mugabe and other party leaders. He also commented that a number of war veterans, now in possession of expropriated farms, had visited him and spoken out against further seizures. They argued that while the government had not provided farming assistance*and had charged exorbitant prices for equipment-the white farmers in their areas had been very helpful with expertise and material inputs.

Bio Note

18. (U) Msipa assumed his present position in 1999. Born in 1931, he joined the National Democratic Party in 1961. He was arrested in 1965 and remained in detention until 1970. He was a founding member of the African National Congress and was Secretary General for ZAPU. He previously served as Minister of Water Resources, as Minister of State for Enterprises and Indignisation in the President,s Office, and as head of ZimTrade, a quasi-governmental organization promoting international trade. He participated in the International Visitor Program, and two of his children studied in the U.S.

Comment

19. (C) Msipa may be overestimating the control Mugabe still exercises within ZANU-PF and the security services. In fact, as the former commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces (ZDF), Solomon Mujuru reportedly still wields great influence with

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the military. In a showdown between Mugabe and Mujuru, the loyalty of the military, and probably the CIO and police as well, would be very much in question. More importantly perhaps, Msipa,s own views about the need for Mugabe to step down echo those of other senior ZANU-PF members with whom we've talked recently and would seem to indicate that the loyalty of the ruling party may also be in doubt.
DELL